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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD -- SENATE

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REPLY TO CRITICISM OF CIA

Mr. SALTONSTALL. Mr. President, for some years now I have been privileged to sit on the special subcommittee which deals with the work of the CIA. Throughout my service on the subcommittee I have been impressed by the dedication of the people working in that agency and by the skill with which they have carried out their very difficult and important jobs. We know that from time to time criticism of the CIA is heard. Unfortunately the many successes of the agency are seldom mentioned in the press and often are not even known since publicity might endanger the success of future programs and even the lives of those carrying them out. On the other hand, when the CIA's judgment appears faulty, sharp criticism sometimes follows.

A recent article which appeared in the Washington Star and other newspapers seems to me to outline very well some of the special problems which face the agency. It was written by one of the persons most knowledgeable about the work of the CIA, Carl Rowan, former Director of the USIA and former Ambassador to Finland, who has now returned to his earlier occupation as a syndicated columnist. As Ambassador Rowan points out:

A good intelligence system has become as crucial to national security as an army, or air forces, or an arsenal of powerful weapons.

I think we should recognize the important role which the CIA has played in our national security. I think, too, that we should give credit where credit is due: Over the years the CIA has done a good job in carrying out the tasks assigned to it. I hope it will continue to do so.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Ambassador Rowan's article be printed in the body of the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington (D.C.) Sunday Star, Dec. 19, 1965]

REPLY TO CRITICISM OF CIA
(By Carl T. Rowan)

Pity the poor old Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It is the perennial whipping boy of the columnists and Congressmen and of just about every foreign dictator seeking to divert attention from his own crookedness or ineptitude.

As one who knows a bit about CIA (which most of its critics decidedly do not), I get a little sick of seeing it badgered and abused by just about everybody capable of scratching out a sentence or calling a press conference.

Now this may be interpreted as my being in favor of sin (which most people are) but put me on record as saying CIA does a pretty darned good job of protecting not only U.S. security but that of many weaker countries all over the world as well.

True, it makes mistakes. Big ones. But only at about the same rate that the State Department, the Defense Department, the White House or my old agency, the U.S. Information Agency makes boobooos.

And you'd be hard pressed to convince me that CIA's ratio of incompetents is any higher than that of the U.S. Senate.

Those who leap to the firing line when they discover it's always open season on CIA seem to ignore one inescapable fact: A good intelligence system has become as crucial to national security as an army, or air force, or an arsenal of powerful weapons.

The foreigners criticizing CIA most (the Russians, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, etc.) know this and nobody expends more effort than they do trying to perfect their cloak and dagger operations.

What we ought not forget is that in many critical situations those last few years, the United States has been able to make the correct decision to guarantee our security because CIA had secured information that our enemies thought we could not possibly possess. The Cuban missiles crisis is an example.

Having said all this, I must concede that CIA is at a critical point in its history. Not only is it scorned the world over, but the standard device for discrediting the Peace Corps, USIA and other American agencies is to link them to the CIA.

During the recent tour of East Africa and southeast Asia, it was made clear to me that suspicion and fear of "the CIA" has become a sort of Achilles heel of American foreign policy.

This may seem to justify the attacks on CIA in Congress and elsewhere but the truth is just the opposite. The home-grown critics are 100 times more to blame for the wild and irrational foreign fear of CIA than is the agency itself.

A Ghana official recently was lamenting the fact that the United States denied a food request because Nkrumah published a book attacking CIA and labeling just about every American who ever put foot in Ghana as a "CIA spy."

"Are you surprised that Americans would react unfavorably to this kind of attack?" I asked.

"We are surprised that you would direct your anger at us," said the Ghana envoy. "Our President took practically everything he wrote out of American books and other publications."

At a dinner in Lusaka, the Vice President of Zambia began conversation by asking me to give him an appraisal of "The Invisible Government," a book by two of my journalistic colleagues about so-called CIA cloak-and-dagger operations abroad.

I ducked the question by commenting: "I only wish CIA were capable of half the things for which it is blamed or praised."

Several Zambian Cabinet members refused to let me duck, however, and I soon found myself caught in a wild discussion with people who believe fervently that CIA is in the business of overthrowing and installing governments all over the world—without the approval or knowledge of the Secretary of State or the President.

I later learned that every top and middle-level Zambian official had been instructed to read "The Invisible Government," Andrew Tully's book "The CIA," and Morris West's new book "The Ambassador."

I'm not naive enough to suggest that newspaper and authors stop writing about CIA. Our society is naturally intolerant of secrecy (which any good intelligence operation requires), so the questioning and criticism will go on.

But it would sure help if some of the critics conceded that, whether we like clandestine intelligence operations or not, they are indispensable in this crazy, crooked, bellicose world in which we live.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, during my recent trip abroad, I was afforded the opportunity of looking over the programs and activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in many countries. Prior to departure, I received extensive briefings from the Agency and during my trip talked in detail with all Agency representatives in the country in question, as has been my custom in past years when visiting abroad.

All felt the latter's programs were fully coordinated with U.S. policy of the Agency with every Ambassador. In every case, no exception, the Ambassador expressed his complete approval of the functioning of the Agency.

I found no instances of any kind where CIA activities were uncontrolled, or contrary to U.S. policy. Indeed it would appear difficult, if not impossible, for such uncontrolled activities to occur. This belief is based on existing coordination procedures and policy directives stemming from the Washington level, plus the controls applicable to field activities.

I have always been impressed, in my contacts with the Agency, with the integrity and professional competence of its representatives. Only twice, in over 10 years, have I found anything to the contrary. Based on the present rules, I doubt if those cases of disagreement could now be duplicated.

It is a pleasure, therefore, to present to the Senate the fact that I agree with Secretary Rusk who, in talking about CIA people, stated:

There is a good deal of gallantry and a high degree of competence in those who have to help us deal with that part of the struggle for freedom.

The Central Intelligence Agency has a difficult, and at times a very dangerous mission to perform. Not all men, or women, of this or any other agency, are perfect, and it is easy to criticize any group which cannot defend itself because of the nature of its work. Nevertheless it is my considered judgment that the American public should be proud of this organization and its people, a group who serve our country with unstinting devotion.

In addition to this brief report, which of necessity must be general, I am also reporting my findings and conclusions in more detail to Chairman RUSSELL and the Subcommittee for the CIA of the Senate Armed Services Committee.